

Members:

Welcome back. I know you have sacrificed time with your families to be here, and I truly appreciate your service to the people of our great state as we convene this Special Session.

I told you when we left a little early that we would MORE than make up for it, and that is exactly what we will do over these next three weeks.

The last time we were gathered together, the House and Senate were at a serious impasse. The majority of this Chamber has maintained that Medicaid expansion under Obamacare is not the right choice for Florida.

Out of respect for the Senate, we were prepared to fully vet their bill though it was not filed by any member of the Florida House. We were ready to do so during Regular Session, and we will do so this week.

What we were NOT prepared to do was guarantee passage of Medicaid expansion as a pre-condition for budget allocations. As you know, without allocations, we cannot get into budget conference. I am grateful to the Senate President and our colleagues across the hall for their willingness to separate these two issues and proceed with our constitutional duty to pass a balanced budget, regardless of the outcome of their Medicaid expansion bill.

Because of this compromise, I am confident that we will be able to complete our work.

Part of our work plan will include broad-based tax relief for Floridians. We do not need to spend every dime that is sent to the state; we need to pencil out a budget, make good choices to cover our basic needs, and send the rest back to Floridians.

I can think of no better solutions to what families are facing in this state than reducing their taxes, lowering the cost of living, and investing in our education system and our infrastructure.

It's these solutions that I am proud to work with you on during this Special Session.

Each of you have received the schedule for the week – Chair Brodeur will be hosting a workshop on FHIX this afternoon. Chair Gaetz and the F & T Committee will be meeting Tuesday to craft our new Tax Package.

On Thursday, we'll take up the exact same budget bills as we did during the Regular Session to get us positioned for conference – members, feel free to watch the Florida Channel archive footage to get all the answers to your questions – it's the same budget...

If all goes as planned, we will start conference on Thursday or Friday. Finally, we'll debate and vote on the Senate's FHIX bill and Tax cuts Thursday and Friday.

That's a run down of this week. Once again, thank you for returning for this Special Session.

Members, we're in overtime. Let's finish with a big win for our state.